



Accessories

- Earbud headphones**
To practice with. A lot of phones have amp-simulator apps for guitarists now, or you might just need to listen to the chorus that you simply can't get in your head.
- Earplugs**
Get a good quality set of earplugs. Your ears are your best asset as a musician, look after them!
- Extension leads (cords)**
Make sure you have power extension leads—ideally all your own gear should be able to go off one power source. I prefer to use reels as they are easy to transport. Where possible, ensure the lead is black—a white lead sticks out like a sore thumb on a dark stage.
- Instrument stand**
Don't leave your pride and joy to slip down the amplifier while you're having a pint in the break.
- Microphone**
Even if you don't sing regularly, if you have one at home you should bring it to gigs. You never know when the lead mic will go out. If you're a singer, you absolutely need to carry a spare microphone with you, with spare XLR cables (cords)—even if you normally go wireless.
- MP3 Player with a playlist already set up**
When you've finished playing the set, having the option of a bit of background music playing is great to offer pubs, and almost essential for a wedding. Just make sure you don't put on songs from your set-list!
- Power leads (cords) for gadgets**
If you're using a tablet, laptop or MP3 player in the gig—or even a satnav to get you there—you'll want to make sure you have a lead to charge it.
- Tuner**
Guitarists, bassists: this isn't an option, it's a necessity. You may have one built into your amp or pedal, which is fine, but there's no excuse for being out of tune!

Spares

- Power leads (cords)**
If your amp has a detachable power lead (called IEC leads or Kettle Leads), for goodness sake, bring a spare.
- Spare batteries**
If you use batteries in anything, take a spare or two.
- Spare leads (Jack, XLR, Amplifier/Speaker)**
Always carry spares of these if you use them. My rule of thumb is: carry at least one spare for each lead you use, plus one extra (just in case)! Make sure you've got a mixture of lengths with you, too. If you're a vocalist, I recommend carrying 3 x 20-foot leads with you as a minimum. If you use an amplifier and it needs speaker leads, bring a spare. Please note, these are not the same as guitar leads, so don't confuse the two.
- Spare strings**
Don't be the person that needs to take a twenty-mile round trip to get a spare string five minutes before the local music shop closes. Just...Don't. Bass players, this includes you. Although it happens less regularly than it does for guitarists, bass strings can (and do) snap.

Tools

- Adjustable spanner (wrench)**
If you have anything that has a nut on it (jack input, strap-locks), bring an adjustable spanner. Because finger-tightening is never enough!
- Pocket torch (flashlight)**
To look behind amps, inside guitar bodies and to use as a pretend lightsabre in the dusty backstage area before the show.
- Scissors**
Trust me, you never know when you'll need them!



Tools (continued)

- Screwdriver**
Do yourself a favour and get a multi-bit screwdriver, and make sure you have heads to fit anything you need to unscrew or tighten—scratchplate (pickguard), microphone stand, battery compartments, strap-locks, etc.
- Soldering iron & solder**
If you can solder, bring a battery-powered iron and solder with you. That way, you can fix a lead in a hurry if you need to.
- String winders**
For electric and acoustic guitars—if you don't have one already, this will save you a lot of time in a string change.
- Utility knife**
Just like scissors, you never know when you'll need one.
- Wire-cutters**
For changing strings.

Consumables

- Cable ties (reusable)**
Fantastic for quick fixes when someone has used all your gaffer tape or, you know...for keeping cables tidy! I prefer the Velcro ones as they're easy to use and reuse, but I usually have a couple of plastic spares too.
- Electrical tape**
For 'tagging' your gear. Also great for quick fixes with cable insulation or creating comedy 'high definition' eyebrows.
- Gaffer tape**
The king of tape. If it moves and it shouldn't, use gaffer tape. Beware as it's relatively pricey and some OCD idiot will try to secure every cable in the building down with long, long strips of your shiny new gaffer tape. Which is not only a waste of money, but a sod to try and get off your leads.
- Masking Tape**
For writing who's in what PA channel or attaching your pick to the microphone stand.

Basic Necessities

- Food and water**
Unless you categorically know you can get food and drink at a reasonable price, always, always pack a couple of bottles of water and a sandwich to tide you over.
- Marker pens**
For set-lists, directions home, phone numbers of cute bar men/maids. Try to stick to black, since it's easy to see under most light colours.
- Painkillers/aspirin**
Playing your set with a thumping headache is not a great idea (probably you just need to drink more water!).
- Paper**
For use with the pens and making origami in the break.
- Phone Charger**
Sitting for two hours backstage can lead to a quick battery drain while playing Candy Crush
- Plasters**
Band-Aids! It might not look glamorous, but it's a damn sight better than bleeding over everything.
- Small Towel**
Humans sweat. If you're jumping round on stage, bring a small towel (not a bath towel!) to wipe your brow if you need it, rather than squinting at the audience through a waterfall of sweat. You'll actually find a small towel, like a beer towel, is invaluable for quickly cleaning things too if need be.